

Rebuilding the Iraqi Fire Service

Monte Fitch

**Assistant Fire and Rescue Chief,
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10:30 a.m. Green Auditorium

Iraq's fire service infrastructure was almost gone: no personal protection equipment, no breathing apparatus, etc. Firefighters even went to fires wearing sandals. Monte Fitch was called back from peaceful retirement for a six-month tour of duty as the civilian fire administrator in one of the most dangerous places in the world. Working for the Coalition Provisional Authority to restore Iraq's fire service brought Fitch back into the fray of rescue work, this time in a battle zone. He will discuss the rebuilding of Iraq's fire service infrastructure, the fire problem in Iraq, and Iraqi building construction.



Monte Fitch retired after 40 years in the fire and rescue service, which included fighting wildfires in the western USA and serving on FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Team at disaster sites such as Oklahoma City, the Atlanta Olympics, and hurricane strikes. Three years later, the grandfather of three was called by the White House for an assignment to rebuild Iraqi infrastructure, mentor the leadership of the Iraq Fire Service, and develop a 10-year, \$500M plan for the country—all within six months.

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